

 **UTHealth**® Houston  
School of Public Health

## Texas Firefighter Cancer Study

June | 2026

### Announcements

#### Texas Firefighter Cancer Study Research Symposium

Mark your calendar for the **Texas Firefighter Cancer Study's Research Symposium** on **Thursday, October 8, 2026** from **10:00 AM to 3:00 PM** at the new School of Public Health building located at 1930 Old Spanish Trail.

The symposium will highlight current research findings from the TFCS study, showcasing contributions from faculty, staff, and students. The event will also provide an opportunity to discuss strategies for protecting firefighter health, with a focus on cancer prevention, mental health, and cardiovascular health. Speakers will include firefighters and fire service leaders, faculty, researchers, students, and state legislators.

If you are interested in attending, please RSVP using the button below.

**Texas Firefighter  
Cancer Study**

**RESEARCH  
SYMPOSIUM**

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**October 8, 2026**  
10 A.M. - 3 P.M.

**UTHealth Houston  
School of Public Health**  
1930 Old Spanish Trail  
Houston, TX 77054

[go.uth.edu/firefightersymposium](https://go.uth.edu/firefightersymposium)



10/08/2026



[RSVP for the Research Symposium](#)

## Behind the Scenes

TCFS researchers and Advisory Board Chair Captain Dominguez recently joined *Unanswered Maydays: Not Leaving Sisters and Brothers Behind!*, a podcast hosted by Mike Jensen that explores some of the most pressing challenges facing the fire service through conversations with researchers, subject matter experts, and fire service leaders.

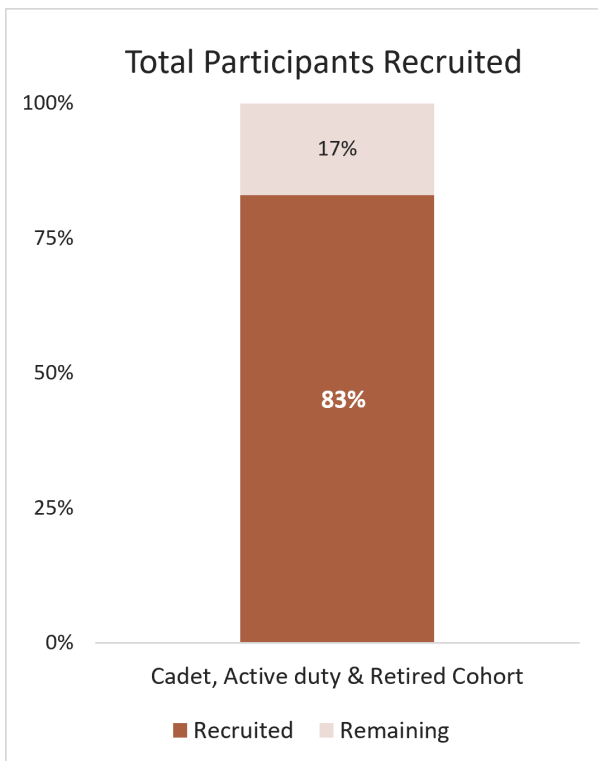
During the episode, our team discussed the importance of reducing the burden of firefighter-related cancers through improved occupational exposure tracking and early detection. As Captain Dominguez noted, “Cancer is the leading cause of line-of-duty deaths in the fire service. Firefighters are 9% more likely to receive a cancer diagnosis than the general population, and each year, nearly 80% of the names added to the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial are attributed to occupational cancers”.

The conversation highlighted how advancing research and strengthening exposure monitoring can help protect firefighters throughout their careers and into retirement.

Listen here or wherever you get your podcasts:

Tune In

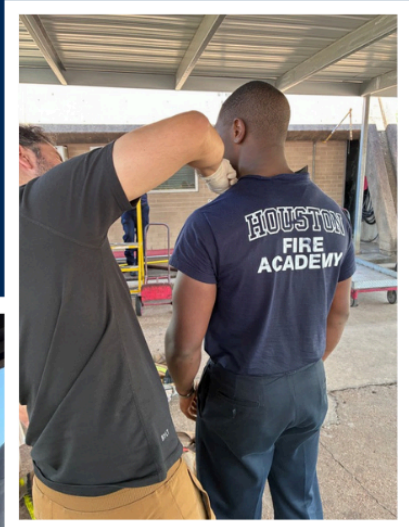
## Recruitment Progress Update



Last month, we completed Post Exposure Sampling with cadets after their live fire suppression training at HFD's Val Jahnke Training Facility (VJTF). We also continued our baseline sampling campaign across the Greater Houston area.

Thank you to VJTF, Baytown, Woodlands, Fulshear Simonton and Pearland Fire Departments for their warm hospitality and participation. Your time, support, and enthusiasm are invaluable to the progress of this work.

# HFD's Val Jahnke Training Facility



## Baytown, Fulshear, and Pearland Fire Department Baseline Sampling Campaigns



### Texas Firefighter Occupational Cancer Epidemiology

Our team is making steady progress on the IRB submission with the Texas Department of State Health Services for the occupational Cancer Epidemiology portion of this study. In parallel, we are preparing a literature review to synthesize the current evidence on firefighting-related cancer risks, carcinogenic exposure pathways, and key evidence gaps relevant to the Texas fire service.

We are excited to continue moving this work forward and will share additional details as the project develops.

### Texas Firefighter Cancer Screening Promotion

Recently, our team completed one individual and two group interviews with six active-duty firefighters at the Houston Fire Department. We are also pleased to share that seven additional participants have signed up for interviews starting June 12, 2026.

We will continue scheduling interviews in the coming weeks. Our scheduling form remains open, and interested participants can sign up [here](#):

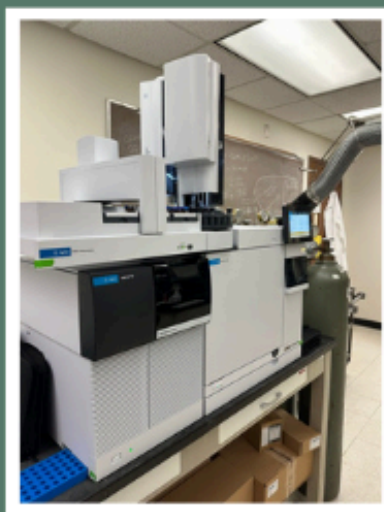


## Building Capacity for Advanced Biospecimen Analysis

As we prepare for the next phase of biospecimen analysis, TFCS research engineers have completed a combined **122 hours** of specialized training. Researchers gained hands-on experience using advanced analytical instrumentation to identify and quantify carcinogens, such as PAH's, in biological and environmental samples.

This training equips our team with the expertise needed to analyze participant samples and identify potential carcinogen exposures with greater precision.

### Gas Chromatography/Mass Spectrometry (GC/MS) Instruments



## Research Funding and Grant Opportunity

Earlier this month, our team submitted a Research Scholar Grant application as part of a \$1.5 million firefighter-specific Cancer Health Research Center proposal to the American Cancer Society. Additionally, we successfully submitted a grant application to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to support the continuation and expansion of the TFCS.

These funding opportunities will help strengthen ongoing research efforts and support the development of evidence-based strategies to protect firefighter health.

For more information, please contact UHealth at: [TFCS@uth.tmc.edu](mailto:TFCS@uth.tmc.edu)

## Why Your Continued Participation Matters

As we prepare for our upcoming visits, we encourage you to continue this journey with us. Each step forward brings us closer to meaningful discoveries that can benefit you, your peers, and future generations of firefighters. Thank you for being an essential part of this work.

Below is an overview of why your samples are being used:

**Why the Samples Are Used**

Researchers collect and analyze samples to identify differences among them and better understand what they reveal about firefighters' exposure to carcinogens from fire smoke.

- Inhalation exposure**
  - Nasal sample
  - Saliva sample
  - Air monitoring\*
- Dermal exposure**
  - Skin wipe & tape sample
  - Turnout gear wipe sample\*
- Systemic exposure**
  - Blood sample
  - Urine sample

\*Houston Active-duty only

The infographic features a line drawing of two firefighters in full turnout gear, including helmets and SCBA. Lines connect the text boxes to specific parts of the gear: one line points to the helmet area for inhalation exposure, another points to the shoulder area for dermal exposure, and a third points to the torso area for systemic exposure.

## Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) Safety Corner

Firefighters face exposures to cancer-causing contaminants long after visible smoke has cleared. The below fact sheets highlight the importance of wearing your SCBA during fire suppression, as well as overhaul operations to reduce exposure and help protect your respiratory health throughout your career.

**International Association of Fire Fighters and the Firefighter Cancer Support Network: Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) Through Overhaul**

**National Fire Protection Association (NFPA): Cancer Risk in Firefighting Fact Sheet**



## AIHA Presentation

Amelia Chen, PhD, a postdoctoral research fellow working with Dr. Hwang, recently presented preliminary findings for this study at the American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA) Conference, generating strong interest and engaging discussions around the study's next steps.

As the team continues advancing data analysis, manuscript development, and future research initiatives—including a lithium battery exposure grant proposal—we look forward to sharing more updates. We are also excited to share that AIHA 2027 will be held in Houston next May.



## Coming Up

### Visit 2: Six-Month Follow-Up Visit (F01) Sampling

Our research team is preparing for the first **six-month follow-up visit (F01)** for participants who have completed their baseline sampling.

#### Austin, TX

**July 13 & 14, 2026**

Austin Public Safety Wellness Center  
517 S. Pleasant Valley Rd. Austin, TX 78741

#### San Antonio, TX

**July 16 & 17, 2026**

Fire Training Academy  
300 S Callaghan Rd.  
San Antonio, TX 782271

#### Dallas, TX

**August 24 & 25, 2026**

Dallas Fire Fighters  
Association  
10956 Audelia Rd.  
Dallas, TX 75243

#### Fort Worth, TX

**August 27 & 28, 2026**

Bob Bolen Public Safety  
Complex Administration  
505 W Felix St.  
Fort Worth, TX 76115

#### Brownsville, TX

**September 2 & 3, 2026**

DHR Health Specialty Clinic

**Houston, TX** (*Retirees seen on 2/21*)

**September 8-11, 2026**

#### El Paso, TX

**September 22 & 23, 2026**

4750 Frontage Rd,  
Brownsville, TX 78526

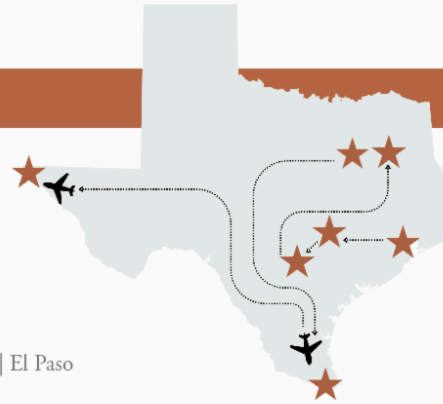
**NEW** UTHealth Houston –  
School of Public Health  
1930 Old Spanish Trail,  
Houston, TX 77054

El Paso Fire Department  
Wellness Center  
9565 Diana Dr.  
El Paso, TX 79924

*Texas Firefighter Cancer Study Team Travel Path*

 **UTHealth Houston**  
School of Public Health

Houston | Austin | San Antonio | Dallas | Fort Worth | Brownsville | El Paso



## Ways to Engage

### Connect with Us

Visit our [webpage](#) to stay up-to-date on our study. Share this newsletter with your fellow firefighters and encourage them to join our mailing list.

If you are interested in taking part of this study or have questions, please submit an inquiry using the [Contact Us](#) form or by email at: [TFCS@uth.tmc.edu](mailto:TFCS@uth.tmc.edu)



[TFCS Website](#) | [Contact Us](#)

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